



## Germany: Facts & Figures December 2005

*A monthly overview of current opinion data and statistical information in the Federal Republic of Germany*

### Federal Politics

If Bundestag elections were held on January 1, the CDU/CSU would receive 37% of the vote, the SPD 32%, the Green Party 8%, the FDP 9%, the PDS (with WASG) 8%, and all other parties combined 3%. (Forsa. 12/28/05)

### Economy

The unemployment rose to 11.1% (November: 10.9%). 4,606 million people were unemployed in December. (Agentur fuer Arbeit, 01/03/06)

Federal, regional and communal deficits declined by 15.8 billion euros to 75.1 billion euros due to strict spending cuts and higher revenues. (Federal Statistics Office. Major papers, 12/30/05)

25 out of 44 economic associations rate the country's economic situation better than a year ago. High exports improved growth and investments. Germans are increasingly optimistic about the future. 45% expressed hopes for next year, the highest number in five years. (IW, Allensbach. Major papers, 12/30/05)

German consumer confidence rose from 3.4 points in December to 3.8 points for January. Reasons given are the end of two months of political uncertainty and a largely smooth start by the grand coalition. (GfK research group. Major papers, 12/29/05)

The consumer price index for Germany is expected to rise by 2.0% on an annual average in 2005. This will be the highest year-on-year rate of price increase since 2001 (also +2.0%). Inflation was lower in 2004 (+1.6%), 2003 (+1.1%) and 2002 (+1.4%). (Federal Statistical Office, 12/27/05)

About 311,000 small businesses or businesses run on a part-time basis were closed down in Germany in the first nine months of 2005, an increase of 8.9% compared to the first nine months of 2004. Overall, 520,000 businesses closed in the first nine months of 2005 (up 5.7% from the corresponding period of the preceding year). Over the same period, the number of business registrations fell by 3.1% to 677,000. (Federal Statistical Office, 12/23/05)

The economic ZEW index drastically increased by 22.9 points to 61.6 points after the CDU/CSU and SPD formed a grand coalition. While the government is sticking to its economic growth prediction of 1.2%, leading economic think-tank Ifo expects growth to reach 1.7% next year, nearly double this year's level, based on an expected strong export performance. (Ifo. Major papers, 12/20/05)

German business confidence rose in December to its highest level in more than five years, at 99.6 points up from 97.8, mostly due to manufacturers being more confident regarding the outlook and expecting to profit from even stronger demand for exports. (Ifo. Major papers, 12/17/05)

### Society

Germany's brain drain of doctors increased in recent years due to higher earnings and better working conditions in other countries. More than 12,000 doctors work abroad (2003: 11,700; 2001: 10,900), including 2,700 in the United States, 2,600 in the U.K., 2000 in Switzerland, 747 in France, 650 in Norway and 708 in Sweden. (Kassenärztliche Bundesvereinigung. Major papers, 12/27/05)

86% of Germans said Berlin should demand international supervision of U.S. prisons based abroad. 48% said Chancellor Merkel should continue former Chancellor Schröder's tough stance on America, but 46% believed it would not be right. 52% said the German government should have made public its information on Khaled el-Masri immediately, 38% disagreed, and 10% were undecided. (Forsa. Stern, 12/15/05)

More than one thousand Germans converted to Islam in 2005, compared to around 350 in 2004. 62% of converts are women. However, only 14,352 out of 3.2 million Muslims in Germany are of German origin. (Central Islam Archives Soest. Major papers, 12/14/05)

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